

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) of the Eastbourne Town Centre Local Plan

Post Adoption Statement

1.0 Introduction

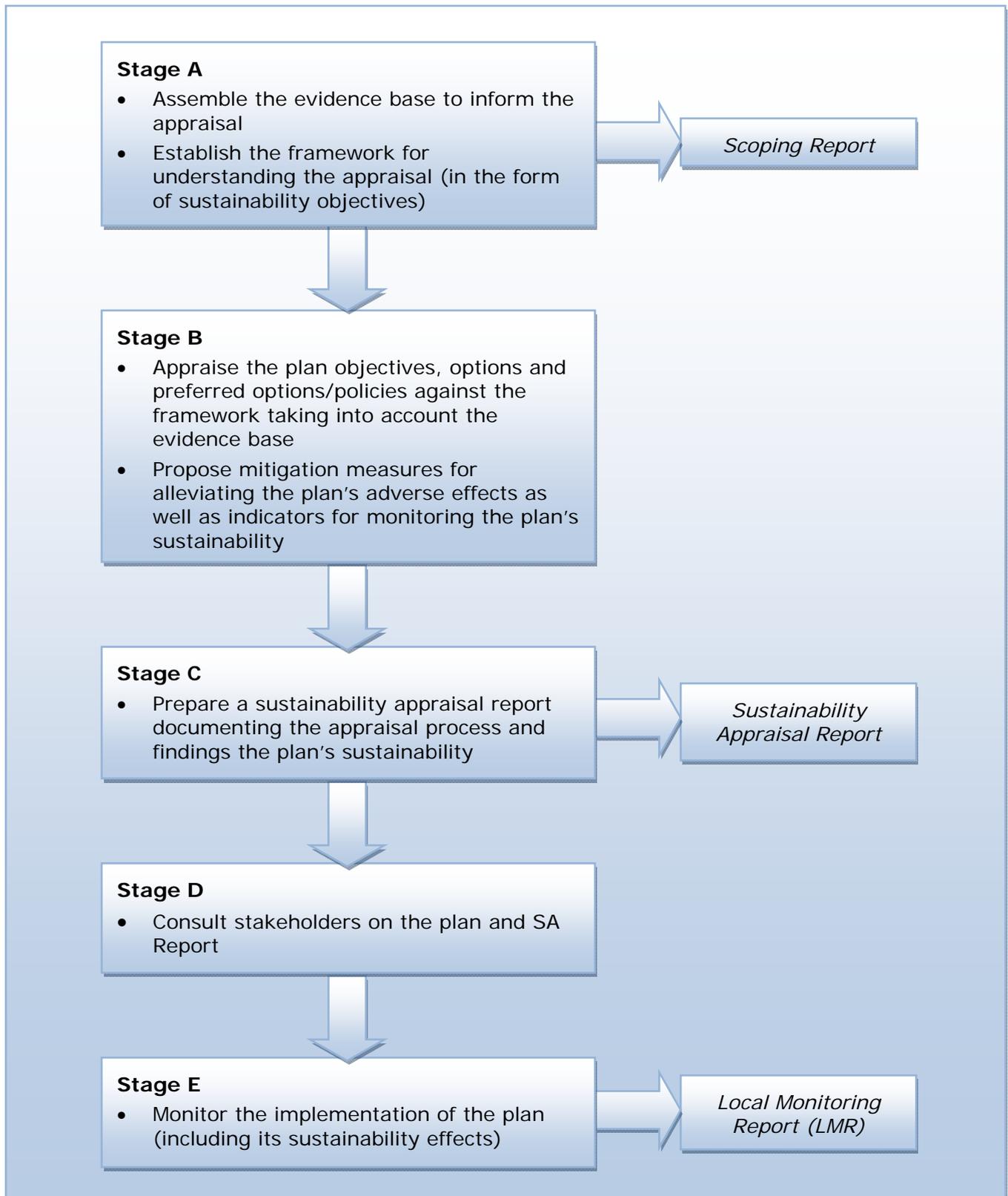
- 1.1 Eastbourne Borough Council adopted Eastbourne Town Centre Local Plan (TCLP) on 20 November 2013. As part of the development of the TCLP, its effects were assessed through Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which incorporated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This report explains how the SA process influenced the development of the TCLP: it is the SA statement for the TCLP.
- 1.2 This SA statement has been prepared in accordance with paragraph (16) (3) and (4) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ("The SEA Regulations"). These regulations transpose into UK legislation European Directive 2001/42/EC (the 'SEA Directive') which require a statement to be produced on adoption of a plan or programme, to detail:
1. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
 2. How the environmental report has been taken into account;
 3. How opinions expressed through public consultation (on the SEA and SA process) have been taken into account;
 4. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with;
 5. The measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Under section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, local authorities must produce a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for any new or revised plan or programme. The overall purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through consideration of social, environmental and economic concerns in the preparation of plans or programmes and to evaluate reasonable alternative approaches, or options. SA is an iterative, ongoing process and was integral to the TCLP's preparation.

2.2 Figure 1 illustrates the entire SA/SEA process, from the initial scoping stage (Stage A), through the stages of developing and refining options (Stage B), preparing the SA report (Stage C), consultation on the SA and plan (Stage D) and monitoring the plan's implementation (Stage E).

Figure 1 - Stages in SA



3.0 How Environmental Considerations have been integrated into the TCLP

3.1 SA Scoping Report

- 3.1.1 An appraisal framework, comprising the key environmental, social and economic issues arising in the borough, was prepared during the scoping stage of the SA, which began in 2009. This led to the preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (SA Scoping Report), which was subject to consultation with statutory consultees and key stakeholders.
- 3.1.2 The SA Scoping Report sets out the framework of sustainability objectives (the SA Framework) and baseline indicators against which the TCLP was tested at each stage in the plan's preparation. The SA Scoping Report also identified the main sustainability issues affecting the Town Centre, set out baseline information and statistics and a review of plans, policies, programmes, strategies and initiatives, which influenced production of the TCLP.
- 3.1.3 The draft SA Scoping Report was issued for consultation in May 2010 for a 5 week period to the three statutory 'consultation bodies' referred to in the SEA regulations: Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency and English Nature), English Heritage and the Environment Agency. Copies of the report were also issued to East Sussex County Council, Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire & Rescue, Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce, Eastbourne Environmental Community Partnership, Eastbourne Housing Partnership, East Sussex Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust.
- 3.1.4 Comments were received from Natural England, Environment Agency, Government for the South East and East Sussex County Council. The comments resulted in a number of changes being made to the Scoping Report.

3.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 3.2.1 SA reports which tested the TCLP against the SA Framework were produced for the Issues and Options and Proposed Submission consultation stages. The Proposed Submission version recorded the full SA/SEA process up to that stage, including the commencement of consultation on the soundness of the TCLP. Additionally, a document outlining the implications of the Revised Submission Version of the TCLP was published in January 2013. Following the Examination, Main Modifications to the TCLP were reviewed to ascertain if they raised any issues for the SA and to identify whether they would result in any significant effects.
- 3.2.2 The outcome of the SA/SEA process at each stage influenced the revision of the options and/or draft policies for the subsequent stage. The SA reports were published and consulted upon alongside the TCLP at each stage and the results of consultation were also fed into the process.

4.0 How the Environmental Report has been taken into account

4.1 The stages of production on the SA, for which consultation on both the TCLP and SA documents took place simultaneously, were as follows:

Table 1 - Stages in Production

Stage	Timeframe
Issues and Options	June 2010
Proposed Submission	July 2011
Revised Submission Version	January 2013

4.2 The outcome of the SA process (including the SA itself and the consultation responses on the SA) has influenced each successive stage of SA as well as the content of the TCLP itself.

4.3 To accord with Regulation 30(1)(d) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008¹, the Council produced a Statement of Consultation. This document, published in January 2012, provides full details of all the consultation exercises undertaken as part of preparing the TCLP and SA and states which persons and organisations were invited to make representations on these documents and how the representations were taken into account.

4.4 The Statement of Consultation effectively fulfils the requirement under paragraph 16(4)(c) of the SEA Regulations, for the local planning authority to indicate how the environmental report (the SA and the SA Scoping Report) and representations on the TCLP and 'relevant documents' were taken into account.

4.5 *SA of Issues & Options*

4.5.1 Under the objectives and indicators in the revised SA Scoping Report, a SA was produced to document the appraisal of the policy options included in the Issues and Options Report. This SA was published for consultation in June 2010 alongside the Issues and Options consultation document itself.

4.6 *SA of Proposed Submission*

4.6.1 This stage of the SA involved predicting the existence, and extent, of environmental, social and economic effects that were likely to arise from the implementation of the preferred policy options together and of 'reasonable alternatives', as required by the SEA Directive. Where it was possible to identify possible mitigation measures for an impact, these were also noted in the SA report for this stage.

4.6.2 In order to comply with the SEA Directive, the assessment at both the Issues and Options and Preferred Options stages took account of:

- The likely significance and timeframe of any impacts

¹ The requirement in this regulation was later replaced by paragraph 22(1)(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which supersedes the 2008 Regulations.

- Cumulative effects such as encouraging development near to transport links, improving public transport and encouraging walking and cycling, all of which should help to reduce car usage and related problems of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Mitigation measures required to overcome or minimise adverse impacts.

4.6.3 The Proposed-Submission SA report documents the entire SA/SEA process up to commencement of consultation on the Proposed-Submission TCLP. The report also indicates how the SA outcome has been taken into account in amending the draft options and policies at each stage prior to this. A number of enhancements were incorporated into the drafting of the TCLP to take account of the results of the SA/SEA and improve the sustainability of the TCLP. These included revising the objectives underpinning the Vision for the Town Centre; better cross referencing to relevant environmental policies within the Core Strategy Local Plan; additional references to outdoor amenity space associated with residential development; references to the importance of heritage assets in the Town Centre; references to improved legibility, pedestrian accessibility, and cycle provision within the Town Centre; and opportunities for enhanced biodiversity.

5.0 How Opinions expressed through Public Consultation have been taken into account

- 5.1 The representations on the TCLP and SA and how these were taken into account are summarised in the Statement of Consultation (January 2012), which provides full details of all the consultation exercises undertaken as part of preparing the TCLP. In addition, a number of comments were received on the SA Scoping report, prepared as part of the initial stage of work on the TCLP. These included comments from the statutory consultees including Natural England and the Environment Agency. Comments were used to refine the SA Framework matrix and are summarised in the main SA Report.
- 5.2 A total of 488 comments were received at the Issues and Options stage, although there were no specific comments on the SA. However, a number of comments received relate to sustainability, primarily regarding traffic congestion, sustainable transport and public realm, together with the proposed mix of uses within the Town Centre and sustainable design.
- 5.3 There were 66 representations received on the Proposed Submission version, and again none were specific to the SA. The representations were sent to the Planning Inspector for consideration. The representations are summarised in the Regulation 30(1)(e) Statement, published in January 2012. This Statement does not however indicate how they were taken into account.
- 5.4 Following submission of the TCLP, a revised submission version of the TCLP was produced to provide modifications to address the Inspectors initial concerns. The changes were screened against the SA Framework and it was concluded that there would be no implications on the SA.

6.0 The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with

- 6.1 The preferred and alternative options were tested via a SA matrix scoring system (SA Framework) commonly used in carrying out sustainability appraisal that tested the degree of positive or negative impact on the SA objectives within the framework.
- 6.2 The SA commented on how sustainable each of these initial options would be along with any considerations that would need to be taken into account when implementing them. This information, together with other evidence informing the plan production, assisted the Council in selecting preferred options.
- 6.3 Modifications were put forward, both before and after the Examination, and as previously mentioned, these modifications were screened against the SA Framework; however none of the proposed modifications were considered to require further detailed SA or require further revision to the TCLP. The main options considered related to the extent of the Town Centre boundary; the appropriate mix of potential land uses in the Town Centre; the location of potential Development Opportunity Sites within the Town Centre; identifying areas where public realm projects should be prioritised; and the extent of the Primary and Secondary retail areas within the Town Centre. Preferred options were identified as part of the consultation process on Issues and Options and informed the production of the submission version of the TCLP.

7.0 The measures that are taken to monitor the significant Environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or Programme

- 7.1 The documents making up the Local Plan for Eastbourne, including the Core Strategy and the TCLP, are to be kept under continuous review by means of a Local Monitoring Report (LMR). The LMR makes provision for monitoring the sustainability of all local planning documents as they are adopted and implemented. Specific monitoring requirements for the TCLP are set out in Section 6 of that document (Table 3: Monitoring Framework refers). They have been informed by the monitoring proposals recommended in Section 6 of the SA.

8.0 Further Information

- 8.1 Relevant documents are available to download:
www.eastbourne.gov.uk/TCLP